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AUTHOR Parker, Jane E.; Johnson, Candine E.
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ABSTRACT

While children approach performance situations with different combinations of motives, parenting and teaching practices can influence the development of each child's achievement behavior. Because achievement motivation is learned, and its development begins early in life with a critical stage during early childhood, it is necessary that pertinent experiences during these years be identified and planned to maximize development of achievement motivation. Active involvement, coping with frustration, self-challenges, and self-evaluation are some of the behaviors parents and teachers should model to influence children's striving to achieve. It is also important to teach children how to be successful and how to set standards that can be reached. Participation in play and sport is one effective way children can develop achievement tendencies. In order to help low achievers experience the joy of realizing their potential, teachers and coaches can manipulate the probability of success and the incentive structure of a task. Positive behavior must be rewarded, and teachers and parents should help children acquire the ability to set realistic goals, reinforce themselves for hard work, and evaluate their ability and effort. Children enjoy participating in activities if they believe they will be successful; their beliefs are based on past experiences and on others' reactions to these experiences. (RH)

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AFFECTING ACHIEVEMENT MOTIVATION

JANE E. PARKER, ED.D.

CANDINE E. JOHNSON, PH.D.

UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

CHARLOTTESVILLE, VIRGINIA

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I. Introduction

"Success begets success" -- "Do well in school and you'll be a success in life" -- and how about "Sport success is perfect training for a successful life?" The stimulus-response (S-R) theorists would say that success is a necessary condition for success. True teachers and parents should try to guarantee success to some degree but this is not the only factor which leads to success. Performance and learning are very complex phenomena which are acted upon by many psychological variables, one of the most important of which is personality. And within the areas of personality and performance, motivation more specifically, achievement motivation is of primary concern.

II. What Is ACHIEVEMENT MOTIVATION?

Achievement motivation is directly related to those situations which contain competition, risk of outcome and most importantly an element of evaluation (by self or other). In simpler terms Murray (19) defined achievement motivation as competition against a standard of excellence which will be evaluated by self or others.

The theory of achievement motivation postulates that two types of components are operating simultaneously, namely pre-dispositional and situational variables.

A. The Predispositional variables are our motives, more specifically the approach motive and the avoidance motive. The individual seeks out pleasure by means of the approach motive and avoids unpleasantness through the avoidance motive. Both of these motives co-exist but to a greater or lesser degree at given times.

The achievement motive can be considered to be a general but a peripheral personality characteristic. It involves an intense and persistent desire to achieve in a competitive situation. It

is related to one's disposition toward striving for success, competition and public evaluation. These are achievement oriented motives which a person brings to each situation. These motives being fairly specific and stable are learned and incorporated into the psychological structures.

B. Situational variables on the other hand are the probability of success or failure of a particular act, and the incentive or attractiveness of success or avoiding failure. McClelland (1975) hypothesized the following model of achievement motivation:

$$T_{AF} = M_{AF} \times P_{AF} \times I_{AF}$$

$$T_{S} = M_{S} \times P_{S} \times I_{S}$$

Through McClelland's model the tendency to approach success and the tendency to avoid failure is explained in terms of:

- M stands for motive to achieve success (S)/avoid failure (AF)
- P stands for probability of success/failure
- I stands for incentive value

The above formulation is relevant only in those achievement settings where the individual's primary motives are achievement oriented. Each person approaches performance situations carrying different combinations of several kinds of motives, for example, affiliation motives, aggression motives, or power motives. Unless the situation is purely achievement oriented, these other motives will contaminate the achievement motive's effect. Pure achievement settings are relatively rare and are usually found only in rigidly controlled experimental research settings. However, one can speculate that athletic competition comes as close as any to satisfying achievement

requirements in real life.

This formulation is clarified by McClelland (1975) somewhat when he emphasizes the three fundamental considerations necessarily present in achievement motivated performances:

1. the individual willingly accepts the responsibility for the outcome of the performance whether or not successful;
2. explicit knowledge of results is available, that is, the person knows the outcome of the performance;
3. same degree of uncertainty is attached to the success/failure of the performance.

The conditions vary and change according to each specific situation and in turn effect the strength of the achievement motive.

III. High-Low Achievers

As with most concepts there are different degrees of achievement motivation. Often individuals are referred to as high or low achievers but what exactly does that mean? High achievers are characterized by a stronger motive to approach success, while low achievers have a stronger motive to avoid failure. In an attempt to behaviorally identify high and low achievers researchers have attributed the following characteristics to the two types of individuals:

▼HIGH ACHIEVERS:	▼LOW ACHIEVERS:
Set realistic goals	Choose extreme tasks
Delay gratification	Need immediate gratification
Persevere	Lack perseverance
High self-concept	Low self-concept
Intrinsically motivated	Extrinsically motivated
Likes knowledge of results	Threatened by evaluation
Prefers achievement situations	Prefers non-achievement situations

If motives are predispositional how are they acquired? Basically they are a result of experience, they are learned. The development of achievement motivation begins early in life with a critical stage during the early childhood (4-8 years of age). (Bardwick, 1971). Therefore, it is necessary that pertinent experiences during these years be identified and planned to maximize development of high levels of achievement motivation. The use of carefully selected experiences can have a major influence in developing self-confidence and the desire to achieve.

Achievement motivation is shaped by interactions with significant individuals and experiences in which children spend a considerable amount of time in their early developmental years. Therefore, interactions with families, school and peers are important. Parents and teachers are very important in the development of achievement strivings in that they serve as role models for their children and students. It is important for children to learn certain behaviors from their models, namely:

→ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT - children need to see their role models involved in play and sport, at whatever level possible.

→COPING WITH FRUSTRATION - children need to see their role models meeting with frustration and dealing with it. When a mistake is made deal with it through self-talk and a positive attitude.

→SELF CHALLENGES - children need to see their role models challenging themselves to do better, not merely attacking simple tasks.

→SELF EVALUATION - children need to see their role models evaluating their own performance.

III. Changing Achievement Motivation

Because children interact with their peers through play the

child's world of play is also an important medium in bringing about desired changes in achievement motivation. Play is a basic and natural part of life. Children learn many things when they play. They can learn by doing and also by watching others. Children watch what goes on in their environment; for within our society, it is important to strive to do our best. Everyone, even children, must compete against their own standards and those set by society. It is important to teach children how to be successful and how to set standards that can be reached. Therefore, play and sport can effectively develop achievement tendencies.

The parent, coach or teacher has little control of the motive structure but they can exert control over the probability and incentive value of a situation. In order to help the low achievers teachers and coaches might set up programs that will help change the low achiever in sport and in class so that they can experience the joy of realizing one's potential. The probability level of a task can be changed by not making the task neither too hard nor too easy. Similarly the incentive of a particular situation can be changed by making the experience more meaningful to the child. Parents and teachers can also help the low achiever by:

- allowing the child to do or try things on his or her own without without depending on others for help;
- encouraging the child to organize and compete in group activities;
- encourage the ability to think independently;
- encourage the child to set realistic goals and then attain them;
- showing support and encouragement for child's efforts.

Adults can also assist in setting goals for children. Goals should be set that are neither too easy nor so dificult that the goals cause frustration. Goals must be set at levels that challenge

the child to strive for success. By helping in setting goals, the adult is indicating faith in the child's ability to meet the goals and to do the tasks well. To restate McClelland's (1975) conditions for achievement situations a child should be taught or assisted in (a) taking responsibility for his or her own efforts and ability, (b) taking an active part in making decisions, and (c) taking the responsibility for success or failure of a task.

If realistic goals are set success will be imminant. However, in some situations failure will occur. It is important for the student to receive appropriate feedback with respect to the causes of failure. It is important for the teacher to provide information feedback (hopefully positive). It is the aim of hopefully all teachers and coaches to set up a psychological reward system from a sense of accomplishment. Besides the teacher's evaluative comments on the outcome of the performance the child will also attribute their own personal causes as to the outcome. It is important for teachers and parents to help children understand their successes and failures by learning to:

- evaluate present ability
- evaluate results of their efforts:
  - effort - luck
  - ability - skill
- set realistic goals
- reinforce hard work

Parents and teachers should be aware of using praise when a goal is met, or when there are successful attempts towards reaching the goal. Positive behavior must be rewarded. In order to help children make the most of their ability, urge the child to do things well while

at the same time teaching them to rely on their own efforts. Children who are rewarded for finishing tasks, come to value achievement as pleasurable. In addition, these children will develop the expectation that their efforts will be successful if they work hard to reach a goal. If children eliminate the phrase "I can't do it" and replace it with "I'll try my best" or "I can do it", it will help them develop healthy desire to achieve or get ahead.

Children enjoy participating in activities if they believe they will be successful. Their beliefs are based on past experiences and the ways in which you have reacted to them. When parents and teachers praise children for trying, whether or not they were successful is not important, what is important is that the child learns the value of effort in an activity. Children have two reasons (which are not necessarily concious) for choosing to participate in an activity: (1) they want to test their abilities in the hope that they will be successful, (2) they want to feel good about themselves. This good feeling comes from two sources: themselves and others. Therefore, parents' and teachers' reactions to their efforts is very important. The encouragement or amount of praise received will effect the child's desire to work hard and to be proud of his or her abilities.

In summary, parenting and teaching practices relate to the development of each child's achievement behavior. It is generally believed that children turn to achievement as a source of satisfaction and security when they are reinforced for it by adults. The attitude which parents and teachers hold about their own personal achievements have been found to affect their attitudes toward their children's and student's achievement activities. Therefore,parenting

and teaching which fosters self-reliance, goal attainment, high levels of performance and decision making aids in the development of achievement motivation.